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August 23, 2002

MAINE BULLETIN NO. ME450-2-11

SUBJECT: TCH – Technical Guide Section II & V

Purpose: To transmit the following changes to Section II & V

Expiration Date: January, 2003

### **Section II**

The lists of Prime Farmland and Additional Farmlands of Statewide Importance have been revised and are now available on the eFOTG. The Prime Farmland list is a list of map units in each county that are considered to be Prime Farmlands based on the criteria in Chapter 7, Part 657 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The list of Additional Farmlands of Statewide Importance is a list of those map units that meet criteria developed in the 1970's in conjunction with several state agencies.

These lists have been edited from what currently exists in Section II of the Tech Guide. The major difference is the removal from the Prime list of all the units that were listed as Prime if irrigated, Prime if drained, etc. All of these units have been removed and added to the list of Statewide Importance. This gives a better representation of what soil units are truly Prime in their natural condition. It also addresses the concerns that have been raised recently on how to handle soils like Buxton, which was listed as prime if drained, when most of the Buxton in Maine is not drained. These lists are specific for each county and include the map unit symbol used in that county. You should review these lists with your Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors and approve or suggest additions or deletions to the list. Please respond to Wayne Hoar, State Soil Scientist with any questions or concerns regarding these lists by October 15, 2002.

Each SWCD has the option to develop a list of Additional Farmland of Local Importance or a list of Unique Farmland for their county. If you wish to develop either of these lists, contact Wayne Hoar. Each of these lists also has specific criteria that must be followed.

Remove and destroy all documents relating to soils in **Oxford, Waldo, Knox-Lincoln and York** counties –**ONLY**. Please refer to previous action requesting to remove and destroy **Southern Arroostook, Franklin and Kennebec** counties in Maine Bulletin ME450-2-12, dated July 31. All these counties are accessible and printable from the new eFOTG site under Section II. We are still in the process of posting soils information for the other soil surveys on the eFOTG and will issue a bulletin once this is available.

## **Section V**

In Section V under (B). "Case Studies" there is a revised word document called "Case Study Development and Use".

Any questions or concerns, please contact Chris Jones, ASTC for Technology/Planning.

/s/ Russell A. Collett

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State Conservationist

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## **ELECTRONIC FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE (eFOTG) INFORMATION SHEET**

The Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) is the first phase of the SmarTech initiative sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Science and Technology Consortium. It is a Web-based application that provides States (and equivalent) with a framework to establish an official, certified, electronic FOTG for field staff and, in the near future, third-party vendors. It includes linkage to a Technology Web site on an intranet for all NRCS employees to be called "my.NRCS". Phase I also provides for Content Manager Accounts restricted to individuals with logins authorized by the State Technical Guide Committees (STGCs). The second phase of SmarTech scheduled for deployment in November will involve greater customization of eFOTG, new interactive conservation tools, and a resource data viewer.

Pilot testing a eFOTG was conducted May 9 through 23, 2002. Ten States participated: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Texas. During the pilot, approximately 40 STGC members used the application to enter technical information as Content Manager onto a live production server in the NRCS Web farm. While offering some suggestions for improvement, all agreed that the eFOTG Content Manager tool was easy to use and was an efficient method for updating the FOTG. Their feedback was very positive regarding the ease of navigating through the sections and downloading information. Both Content Managers and field office employees believed the learning curve for gaining proficiency in the use of eFOTG was short and not much training was required.

A few points for your information:

- Initially all NRCS employees will have access to the State (and equivalent) eFOTG through a "my.NRCS" Web site based on their logins. Later during Phase I there will be access for certified third-party vendors and the general public. A State's (and equivalent) eFOTG will contain State Conservation Practice Standards, soils information, and other technical references that have been approved by the STGC. If the information is approved for use in a specific area, e.g., Major Land Resource Area(s) or county(s) rather than statewide, it should be categorized as such in the appropriate section of the eFOTG.
- Links to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices, as well as to other national technical references such as the National Planning Procedures Handbook, will be provided on the "my.NRCS" Technology page, which is separate from the State (and equivalent) eFOTG.
- Phase II implementation, November, 2002, will provide NRCS field staff and third party vendors the means to create FOTG "Thunderbooks" of frequently used material, which can be downloaded to laptops and hand-held computing devices. Deliverables include:
  - "my.NRCS" customizable eFOTG pages
  - SmarTech intelligent search capability
  - Thunderbook download
  - Resource Data Viewer